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Report of the twenty-fifth session of the

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Rome, 24–28 February 2003

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Report of the twenty-fifth session of the

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Rome, 24–28 February 2003

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome 2003

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Fisheries held in Rome from 24 to 28 February 2003.

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ABSTRACT

The Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries was held in Rome, Italy, from 24 to 28 February 2003. The Session was characterized by high representation, active participation and significant outcomes on substantive issues. The Committee approved a Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries and recommended its further approval by the FAO Council. The Committee further recommended that monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy constitute an integral component of monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Committee reaffirmed the need for global implementation of measures against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and recommended that IUU fishing be included in the Agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the FAO Conference with a view to calling attention of Members to this issue. The Committee recognized the crucial importance of the Code of Conduct and its related International Plans of Action (IPOAs) in promoting long-term sustainable development of fisheries and encouraged Members to establish and implement National Plans of Action to put into effect the IPOAs on Capacity, IUU Fishing, Sharks and Seabirds. The Committee agreed that the Director-General of FAO should enter into consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to defining practical modalities for the implementation of the (Part VII) trust fund, to facilitate the implementation of the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement by developing States Parties, in particular the least developed among them and small island States. The Committee highlighted the importance of aquaculture and small-scale fisheries as means to increase fishery production to generate income and foreign exchange to alleviate poverty, to increase food security and to provide for diversification of employement. The Committtee identified key priority areas of work for the FAO Fisheries Department during the biennium 2004–2005 and the areas of work for its Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture. The Committee agreed to the convening of a number of technical/expert consultations on specific areas of fisheries, including review of progress on promoting the implementation of IPOA–IUU and IPOA-Capacity, on port States measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, on sea turtles interactions and conservation, on subsidies and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) related issues for commercially-exploited aquatic species.

Distribution:

All FAO Members and Associate Members
Participants at the session
Other interested nations and national and international organizations
FAO Fisheries Department/Fishery Officers in FAO Regional Offices

联合国粮食及农业组织
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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6 March 2003

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), which was held in Rome, from 24 to 28 February 2003.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Jerónimo Ramos Sáenz-Pardo
Chairman of the Committee on Fisheries

Mr. Azik Mekouar
Independent Chairman
Council of FAO

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MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

The Committee:

Draft Strategy
for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries

i) **Approved** the draft Strategy, attached as Appendix H, as an important framework for improving information on status and trends of fisheries and recommended its further approval by the FAO Council.

(para. 65)

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

i) **Recommended** that IUU fishing be included in the Agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the FAO Conference with a view to calling attention of Members to this issue.

(para. 110)

Implementation of the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement

i) **Agreed** that the Director-General of FAO should enter into consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to defining practical modalities for the implementation of the (Part VII) trust fund.

(para. 27)

FOR DECISION/INFORMATION

Achievements of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries 2000-2002

i) **Commended** FAO for the progress achieved in the implementation of the work under the Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries.

(para. 11)

ii) **Emphasized** the importance of new challenges to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and the key role required from the part of FAO under the guidance of the Committee.

(para. 11)

iii) **Noted** with concern the relative stagnation of funding for fisheries and requested that the Organization consider the feasibility of increasing its budgetary allocation to this important Major Programme from FAO Regular Programme resources.

(para. 11)

iv) **Noted** with satisfaction that FAO has strengthened its collaboration with other specialized international institutions or arrangements, such as WTO, ILO and CITES.

(para. 15)

Progress Report ont the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Related International Plans of Actions and Making Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of Fishing Vessels more Effective

i) **Recognized** the crucial importance of the Code of Conduct and its related IPOAs in promoting long-term sustainable development in fisheries and aquaculture.

(para. 18)

ii) **Urged** FAO to broaden and deepen its efforts to promote the implementation of the Code of Conduct and its IPOAs, building on positive past experience.

(para. 18)

iii) **Noted** the first analysis based on sixteen case studies of Code of Conduct implementation, allowing a more substantive analysis of the challenges being faced in its implementation.

(para. 18)

iv) **Encouraged** Members to establish and implement national plans of action on sharks and seabirds.

(para. 19)

v) **Agreed** that strenuous efforts should be made to control fleet capacity, particularly that of large-scale fishing vessels, and, as appropriate, implement measures to reduce overcapacity and prevent it from migrating to other fully exploited or overexploited fisheries.

(para. 20)

vi) **Noted** the need to monitor fleet capacity of large scale fishing vessels on a global basis.

(para. 20)

vii) **Expressed** concern about the continuing high and growing incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the lack of effective implementation of the IPOA–IUU.

(para. 21)

viii) **Reaffirmed** the need for the global implementation of measures against IUU fishing.

(para. 21)

ix) **Agreed** that there is a linkage between fleet overcapacity and IUU fishing.

(para. 23)

x) **Endorsed** a proposal by Japan that FAO should convene a Technical Consultation at FAO Headquarters in Rome in early 2004 to review progress and promote the full implementation of the IPOA–IUU and the IPOA-Capacity.

(para. 23)

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xi) **Agreed** that this Consultation should not lead to the re-negotiation of the IPOAs on capacity and IUU fishing.

(para. 23)

xii) **Endorsed** the proposal of the Expert Consultation to convene a technical consultation to address substantive issues relating to the role of the port State to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

(para. 24)

xiii) **Agreed** that while taking into consideration existing work on sea turtle interactions and conservation, a Technical Consultation as proposed by Japan should be held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2004.

(para. 25)

xiv) **Agreed** that the Director-General of FAO should enter into consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to defining practical modalities for the implementation of the (Part VII) trust fund.

(para. 27)

xv) **Reviewed** the current status of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and vessel monitoring systems (VMS) as tools for responsible fisheries management

(para. 28)

xvi) **Recognized** the need for international cooperation in making VMS more effective as part of the MCS toolkit and particularly for dealing with the serious and growing problems of IUU fishing.

(para. 29)

xvii) **Noted** the activities of the International MCS Network and encouraged Members to join in this voluntary effort.

(para. 31)

xviii) **Agreed** that FAO should continue to be closely involved with the work of the MCS Network, including provision of strengthened technical support for the coordination of communications and facilitation of awareness raising among Members for Network activities depending on the availability of resources to do so.

(para. 31)

xix) **Welcomed** advice by the ILO Representative that a convention on labour conditions on fishing vessels would be elaborated by ILO, commencing in 2003.

(para. 32)

xx) **Noted** that developing countries face difficulties with regard to capital and technical expertise and have often recourse to the establishment of joint ventures.

(para. 34)

Decisions and Recommendations on the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Bremen, Germany, 12-16 February 2002

i) **Expressed** its satisfaction with the work of the Sub- Committee and the important role played by FAO in the field of fish trade.

(para. 36)

ii) **Endorsed** the report of the Eighth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and provided a number of pertinent observations.

(para. 37)

iii) **Decided** to include as an agenda item for the Ninth Session of the Sub-Committee a report on the alleged link of the use of the fishmeal for animal feed to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

(para. 41)

iv) **Indicated** that FAO should continue the work on harmonization of catch certification schemes, and this should be put on the agenda of the next COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

(para. 43)

v) **Expressed** its appreciation for the generosity of the Hanseatic City of Bremen for hosting the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and welcomed its offer to host the next Session of the Sub-Committee.

(para. 45)

vi) **Acknowledged** the work undertaken by the open-ended Friends of the Chair Group and expressed disappointment that consensus could not be reached on the draft MOU between FAO and the CITES Secretariat.

(para. 47)

vii) **Adopted** the Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Expert Advisory Panel for Assessment of Proposals to CITES, and the Work Plan as reproduced in Appendixes E and F.

(para. 48)

viii) **Agreed** that an open-ended informal group should continue work on the MOU at opportune times including at the Ninth Session of COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade in 2004, and to delegate the authority to finalize the draft FAO/CITES Secretariat MOU to the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

(para. 48)

ix) **Acknowledged** the offer by the delegations of Norway and Japan to provide extra-budgetary resources to organize the expert consultations on CITES related issues.

(para. 50)

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Decisions and Recommendations on the First Session of COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Beijing, China, 18-22 April 2002

i) **Endorsed** the Report of the Sub-Committee.

(para. 51)

ii) **Thanked** the People's Republic of China and the Government of Italy for hosting and supporting the First Session.

(para. 51)

iii) **Appreciated** the excellent work of the Sub-Committee and the Secretariat.

(para. 51)

iv) **Recognized** the importance of aquaculture as a means to increase fishery production, to generate income and foreign exchange, to help restore and relieve pressure on wild populations, to alleviate poverty, to increase food security and to provide for diversification of employment.

(para. 52)

v) **Acknowledged** that the expertise of FAO will be critical in developing science-based standards for the responsible development of aquaculture from culture to the finished products.

(para. 53)

vi) **Appreciated** the offer of Japan to create a Trust Fund for Aquaculture Development.

(para. 53)

vii) **Agreed** to further discuss issues related to prioritization and additional financial resources for aquaculture activities under agenda item 12 dealing with the FAO Programme of Work and Budget.

(para. 54)

viii) **Noted** the work of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA).

(para. 56)

ix) **Supported** continuation of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and thanked Norway for its offer to host the second Session in Norway from 7 to 11 August 2003.

(para. 58)

x) **Noted** that the USA was considering the possibility of hosting the third Session of the Sub-Committee.

(para. 58)

Outcome of the Technical Consultation on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries, Rome, 25–28 March 2002

i) **Reaffirmed** that improved data and information are of fundamental importance for effective policy-making and fisheries management, essential for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and central to the mandate of FAO

(para. 62)

ii) **Stressed** that high priority should be given to capacity-building and the provision of technical assistance to developing countries, as emphasised in the draft Strategy.

(para. 63)

iii) **Recognized** the need for improved regional cooperation in improving data and information on status and trends of fisheries and the roles of regional fishery bodies and FAO as stated in the draft Strategy.

(para. 64)

iv) **Approved** the draft Strategy, attached as Appendix H, as an important framework for improving information on status and trends of fisheries and recommended its further approval by the FAO Council.

(para. 65)

v) **Recognized** the need for additional funding requirements for implementation of the Strategy

(para. 66)

vi) **Endorsed** the proposal to seek extra-budgetary funds from donors for projects implementating the Strategy under the FishCode Programme.

(para. 66)

vii) **Noted** the offer by the United States of America and Japan that they would make financial contribution to promote the implementation of the Strategy.

(para. 66)

viii) **Recommended** that the Secretariat should monitor the implementation of the Strategy as an integral component of monitoring implementation of the Code of Conduct and its related instruments, and report back regularly to COFI.

(para. 67)

Conclusions and Recommendations of the FAO Expert Consultation on Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fishing Industry, Rome, Italy, 3-6 December 2002

i) **Appreciated** the work undertaken by the Secretariat on this issue and noted the Report of the Expert Consultation as well as the conclusions and recommendations contained therein.

(para. 70)

ii) **Urged** FAO to accelerate its work in relation to the impact of subsidies on fisheries resource sustainability and sustainable development.

(para. 71)

iii) **Encouraged** FAO to continue its leading role in promoting cooperation and coordination with other relevant intergovernmental organizations such as the WTO, OECD, UNEP and others in the field of fisheries.

(para. 71)

iv) **Agreed** that the guide Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fisheries Sector prepared by FAO and reviewed by the expert consultation provides a useful technical tool.

(para. 72)

v) **Agreed** with the Japanese proposal that FAO should convene a Technical Consultation on this issue to be held immediately after the meeting on IUU fishing and fleet overcapacity in early 2004 in Rome.

(para. 73)

Strategies for Increasing the Sustainable Contribution of Small-Scale Fisheries to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

i) **Commended** the Secretariat for the quality of the document.

(para. 76)

ii) **Endorsed** the analysis presented and the Strategies proposed.

(para. 76)

iii) **Applauded** FAO's initiative to treat the small-scale fisheries sector as a stand alone agenda item for the Committee's attention.

(para. 76)

iv) **Highlighted** the important role of women in small-scale fish processing and marketing activities.

(para. 76)

v) **Noted** the high vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities to the impacts of natural catastrophes and the high risks associated with small-scale fishing operations.

(para. 77)

vi) **Recognized** that certain current policies do not always treat small-scale fisheries in accordance with the sector's importance to national economic and social development and, in particular, its contribution to food security and poverty reduction.

(para. 80)

vii) **Further recognized** that small-scale fisheries have often been overlooked in the formulation of national poverty reduction strategies.

(para. 80)

viii) **Stressed** that better understanding of the causes of vulnerability and poverty in small-scale fisheries were essential to the development of strategies for enhancing the role of the sector in fostering national social and economic welfare.

(para. 81)

ix) **Recognized** the valuable experiences reported by several Members in enhancing the social and economic contributions of small-scale fisheries.

(para. 82)

x) **Requested** that FAO allocate more resources to promote sustainable small-scale fisheries.

(para. 84)

xi) **Welcomed** the suggestion for the Organization to elaborate, in the context of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, technical guidelines on increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation.

(para. 84)

Implementation of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management to Achieve Responsible Fisheries Resources and to Restore Fisheries Resources and the Marine Environment

i) **Noted** that many Members were already addressing several aspects of EAF.

(para. 87)

ii) **Agreed** that although the approach needed further clarification, many of its aspects could already be introduced into current fisheries management practices.

(para. 89)

iii) **Suggested** that FAO, through case studies on small-scale fisheries, develop an adopted EAF tool box with rapid appraisal techniques, participatory processes, conflict resolution, integrated resource, assessment and management, including co-management, and capacity-building.

(para. 90)

iv) **Supported** the role of FAO in facilitating the process of adoption of the ecosystem approach as agreed during the WSSD.

(para. 93)

v) **Suggested** that closer cooperation on the approach with regional fishery organizations would improve consensus and generate more sense of ownership of the Technical Guidelines on the part of those in charge of their implementation.

(para. 93)

Review of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries

i) **Identified** priority areas which are listed in no particular order: promotion of aquaculture and inland fisheries in food security, strengthening of regional fishery bodies in particular to appropriately assist developing countries in improving their fisheries management, implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments such as International Plans of Actions as well as elaboration of technical guidelines, pursue collaboration with CITES, support sustainable small-scale fisheries and their better inclusion within the formulation of poverty reduction strategies, working on the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, implementation of the strategy for improving status and trends reporting, and maintaining the fisheries library.

(para. 104)

ii) **Stressed**, as a matter of principle, that the priorities identified by COFI should be reflected in the PWB.

(para. 104)

iii) **Recommended** that deep sea fisheries should be included in the agenda at the next Session of COFI.

(para. 106)

Any Other Matters

i) **Welcomed** the decision of the Government of Mexico to provide additional financial resources to the Trust Fund that had been set up to help FAO award the Margarita Lizárraga Medal.

(para. 108)

ii) **Noted** that IUU fishing continues to adversely affect the sustainable management of fisheries and that without the political will it would be difficult for many countries to develop national plans of action called for in paragraph 25 of the IPOA–IUU by 2004 or to adopt measures to deter, reduce and eliminate IUU fishing.

(para. 110)

iii) **Recommended** that IUU fishing be included in the agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the FAO Conference with a view to calling attention of Members to this issue.

(para. 110)

iv) **Noted** additional fisheries issues raised by some Members namely: the planned Conference on the Management and Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Antarctic by Japan, the "White Water to Blue Water" initiative involving a variety of Caribbean countries and other partners by the United States of America and the reference by Japan to FAO's Fisheries Technical Paper 401 entitled "Understanding the Cultures of Fishery Communities" published in 2001.

(paras. 109, 111, 112)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on Fisheries held its Twenty-fifth Session in Rome from 24 to 28 February 2003.

2. The Session was attended by 120 Members of the Committee, by observers from one other FAO Member Nation, the Holy See, and two non-Member Nations of FAO, by representatives from six specialized agencies of the United Nations and by observers from 57 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations. A list of delegates and observers is attached as Appendix B.

3. In the absence of Mr Masayuki Komatsu (Japan), the outgoing Chairperson of the Committee and Ms Mara Angelica Murillo Correa (Mexico), First Vice-Chairperson, the Session was called to order by the Secretary of the Committee on Fisheries. The delegation of Japan read a letter on behalf of Mr Komatsu, recalling the outcome of the last session and conveying his best wishes for the successful conclusion of the Committee's work.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND DESIGNATION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

4. Mr Jerónimo Ramos Saenz Pardo (Mexico) was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Committee and Mr Glenn Hurry (Australia) was elected First Vice-Chairperson. Poland, Egypt, United States of America, Mauritania and India were elected as other Vice-Chairpersons.

5. The Committee elected Mr François Gauthiez (France) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the following membership: Angola, Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, European Community, France, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and United States of America.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

6. The Session was addressed by Mr David A. Harcharik, FAO Deputy Director-General. The full text of his statement is attached as Appendix D.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

7. The Committee noted the Declaration of Competence and Voting Rights presented by the European Community.

8. The Committee agreed to establish a "Friends of the Chair Group" with an open ended membership drawn from Members to discuss future cooperation between FAO and the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) Secretariat. Coordinated by Mr Carlos Dominguez Diaz, Spain, the Group held its deliberations in parallel with the work of the Committee.

9. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the Session. The Agenda is given in Appendix A to this Report. The list of documents which were placed before the Committee are shown in Appendix C.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF MAJOR PROGRAMME 2.3 FISHERIES 2000–2002

10. The Secretariat highlighted the achievements of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries during the 2000-2002 period on the basis of documents COFI/2003/2, COFI/2003/Inf. 4, 5, and 6. These achievements included work reported upon in the Programme Implementation Report 2000–2001 concerning Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries, as well as work undertaken by the Fisheries Department as follow-up to the recommendations of the Twenty-fourth Session of the Committee on Fisheries.

11. The Committee commended FAO for the progress achieved in the implementation of the work under the Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries, in general, and with special reference to its efforts to develop fisheries and aquaculture on a long term sustainable basis within the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, related International Plans of Action, and other international instruments. The Committee emphasized the importance of new challenges to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and the key role required from the part of FAO under the guidance of the Committee. In this regard, the Committee noted with concern the relative stagnation of funding for fisheries and requested that the Organization consider the feasibility of increasing its budgetary allocation to this important Major Programme from FAO Regular Programme resources.

12. Several Members commended FAO for improved reporting on achievements although a greater emphasis on transparency, setting priorities and reporting of impacts of FAO programmes was also suggested. FAO's efforts to disseminate related information on fisheries and aquaculture, such as SOFIA, ASFA or FIGIS, were noted.

13. Some Members sought clarification on specific aspects of the programme outcome, with some concern being expressed in relation to unplanned activities, their funding and their potential impact on the agreed Programme of Work. The Secretariat advised the Committee that most unplanned activities were funded from extra-budgetary sources and that the rate of delivery was over 100 percent for five of the seven main elements of the Major Programme. It stressed that the ratio of unplanned to approved activities remained at a very low level, despite the fact that unexpected developments in fisheries and aquaculture required that some adjustments be made to the programme, remaining in any case within the generally agreed areas of priority.

14. Many Members, especially developing countries, called for increased technical and financial assistance as well as training in support of the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries – in particular with reference to fisheries management, sustainable aquaculture, and improvements in the quality, safety and trade of fisheries products. A strong call was also made for increased attention to be paid to small scale fisheries and their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. In this regard, several Members commended the work of the DFID-funded Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Programme implemented by FAO in 25 West African countries.

15. The Committee noted with satisfaction that FAO has strengthened its collaboration with other specialized international institutions or arrangements, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INTERNATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION (CAPACITY, IUU FISHING, SEABIRDS AND SHARKS) AND MAKING MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE OF FISHING VESSELS MORE EFFECTIVE

16. The Secretariat introduced documents COFI/2003/3 Rev.1, 4, Inf.7, 8 and 9. The Secretariat also referred to its global partnership programme for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, noting the important roles played by the FishCode and the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programmes.

17. The Secretariat drew the attention of the Committee to paragraphs 63 to 66 of document COFI/2003/3 Rev.1 relating to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/143 of 12 December 2002. This Resolution, inter alia, creates a programme of assistance (a voluntary Part VII trust fund within the UN system) to support developing States Parties in their efforts to implement the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The Resolution notes the role of FAO and its responsibility for fisheries in the United Nations system and requests the FAO Committee on Fisheries to consider FAO's participation in the development and management of the trust fund. The Secretariat added that subject to the views and guidance of the Committee, through the FAO Council, the Director-General would be prepared to enter into consultations with the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to defining practical modalities for the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Resolution relating to the trust fund.

18. The Committee recognized the crucial importance of the Code of Conduct and its related IPOAs in promoting long-term sustainable development in fisheries and aquaculture. Members highlighted national activities being undertaken to implement these instruments. Many Members from developing countries indicated that a lack of capacity constrained implementation and they appealed to FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to facilitate implementation, especially for the development of national plans of action to implement the IPOA–IUU. The Committee urged FAO to broaden and deepen its efforts to promote the implementation of the Code of Conduct and its IPOAs, building on positive past experience as a means of enhancing management and utilization in the fisheries sector, strengthening food security and contributing to poverty alleviation in developing countries. The Committee noted the first analysis based on sixteen case studies of Code of Conduct implementation, allowing a more substantive analysis of the challenges being faced in its implementation.

19. Some Members informed the Committee that their efforts to develop national plans of action to implement the IPOAs on sharks and seabirds had not progressed to a significant extent. Several Members indicated that a lack of technical assistance from FAO had been partly the cause for this lack of progress with implementation, while others noted that they did not yet have enough data to complete their assessements. The Committee encouraged Members to establish and implement national plans of action on sharks and seabirds.

20. The Committee agreed that strenuous efforts should be made to control fleet capacity, particularly that of large-scale fishing vessels, and, as appropriate, implement measures to reduce overcapacity and prevent it from migrating to other fully exploited or overexploited fisheries. Such capacity and migration control is essential if fish stocks are to be managed responsibly and if overexploited stocks are to be rehabilitated. The Comitttee also noted the need to monitor fleet capacity of large scale vessels on a global basis.

21. The Committee expressed concern about the continuing high and growing incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the lack of effective implementation of the IPOA–IUU. Some Members noted that a lack of political will by some Governments to deal with IUU fishing and to meet their international obligations encouraged the proliferation of IUU fishing and related activities. Many Members pointed out that such IUU fishing, often by displaced vessels, undermined efforts to sustainably manage fisheries at both national and regional levels. Many Members agreed that measures of positive listing for fishing vessels should be adopted by regional fishery bodies (RFBs). The Committee reaffirmed the need for the global implementation of measures against IUU fishing.

22. Many Members proposed a range of initiatives to more effectively address IUU fishing including strengthening the functions of RFBs, encouraging the early entry into force of the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement, exercising control over nationals involved in fishing activities, enhancing port State measures, improving and extending catch documentation schemes to permit the traceability of fish after capture, decommissioning and scrapping vessels rather than deregistering them and reviewing hard and soft law fishery instruments relating to IUU fishing to assess their effectiveness and to close gaps that might exist. Many Members made specific reference to the importance of the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Several Members explained the steps they have taken to tighten fishing vessel registration procedures, including changes to national legislation and the deregistration of vessels that have engaged in IUU fishing.

23. The Committee agreed that there is a linkage between fleet overcapacity and IUU fishing. Some Members also stated that this relationship was exacerbated by the payment of government subsidies to industry. A proposal by Japan that FAO should convene a Technical Consultation at FAO Headquarters in Rome in early 2004 to review progress and promote the full implementation of the IPOA–IUU and the IPOA–Capacity was endorsed by the Committee. Japan advised that it would financially support the Consultation. The Committee agreed that this Consultation should not lead to the re-negotiation of the IPOAs on capacity and IUU fishing.

24. Recognizing the important role that port States play in preventing, deterring and eliminating IUU fishing, many Members welcomed the outcome of the Expert Consultation to Review Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. The Committee endorsed the proposal of the Expert Consultation to convene a technical consultation to address substantive issues relating to the role of the port State and, as appropriate, principles and guidelines for the establishment of regional memoranda of understanding on port State measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. Some Members suggested that such a Technical Consultation address the establishment of international instruments on port State measures to combat IUU fishing.

25. The incidental catch of some species of sea turtles in some regions was a matter of concern for many Members. The Committee agreed that while taking into consideration existing work on sea turtle interactions and conservation, a Technical Consultation as proposed by Japan should be held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2004. Japan indicated its willingness to financially support the Consultation. The scope of the meeting is to: i) review the available information on the current status of sea turtle conservation including both incidental and direct catches, their impacts on the populations and other factors affecting the mortality of sea turtles; ii) review the new development of fishing gears and techniques to reduce sea turtles mortality by incidental

catches and other techniques to improve sea turtle conservation; iii) produce, if appropriate, guidelines to reduce sea turtle mortality in fishing operations, and iv) consider desirable assistance to Members of developing countries for the conservation of sea turtles.

26. Several Members referred to the need for the improved management of deep sea fisheries, especially those that are discrete high seas stocks and noted that international law requires further development in this regard. Several Members invited FAO to play a disseminating role for the measures adopted by RFBs relating to deep sea fisheries. Members welcomed the convening of the Deep Sea Conference by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, in cooperation with FAO, in Queenstown, New Zealand, in December 2003. Members noted that this Conference should, *inter alia*, address management issues. Members also requested that the next session of COFI be informed of the results of the Conference.

27. Some Members expressed support for FAO's involvement in the voluntary Part VII trust fund to be established within the UN system to support developing States Parties in their efforts to implement the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. It was stressed that the creation of such a trust fund would constitute one means among others of assisting developing countries to participate in the implementation of the Agreement. The Committee agreed that the Director-General of FAO should enter into consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to defining practical modalities for the implementation of the trust fund. Members also welcomed the announcement by Canada that it would convene an international Conference in 2004 or 2005 concerning the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The primary purposes of the Conference would be to encourage ratification of or accession to the Agreement, review its implementation to date and prepare for the Review Conference mandated by Article 36 of the Agreement.

28. The Committee reviewed the current status of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and vessel monitoring systems (VMS) as tools for responsible fisheries management. Many Members commended initiatives undertaken by FAO and the FishCode Programme to promote human resources development and institutional strengthening to achieve more effective use of MCS and VMS. Particular acknowledgement was given for the provision of technical and legal advisory services to developing countries through the FishCode Programme, and it was urged that such assistance be continued and expanded.

29. The Committee recognized the need for international cooperation in making VMS more effective as part of the MCS toolkit and particularly for dealing with the serious and growing problems of IUU fishing. Members called for the standardization of data formats and procedures, and spoke of the desirability of FAO's study or FAO convening an Expert Consultation on such standardization which Norway offered to host. Some Members noted the need to minimize the burden to fishers, confidentiality considerations and cost efficiency with regards to MCS measures.

30. The Secretariat explained that the proposed meetings as referred to in paragraphs 23, 24, 25 and 29 would require additional financial resources for these activities, with the possibility of financing the participation of developing countries in the proposed meetings. One Member stressed that as these meetings and the facilitation of the implementation of the Code of Conduct in general are one of the major tasks of FAO, these costs have to be taken account of when finalizing the Programme of Work and Budget.

31. The Committee noted the activities of the International MCS Network and encouraged Members to join in this voluntary effort. The Network has an important role to play in promoting international cooperation including information exchange in order to promote more effective MCS for sustainable fisheries. The Committee further agreed that FAO should continue to be closely involved with the work of the Network, including provision of strengthened technical support for the coordination of communications and facilitation of awareness raising among Members for Network activities depending on the availability of resources to do so.

32. The Committee welcomed advice by the ILO Representative that a convention on labour conditions on fishing vessels would be elaborated by ILO, commencing in 2003. The convention would support the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and consolidate and update six ILO instruments relating to employment conditions on fishing vessels. In developing the convention, ILO would consult broadly.

33. Some Members expressed their appreciation for the outcome of the Expert Consultation on the Management of Shared Stocks, noting that valuable information had been presented and exchanged. The results of the Consultation could be used to enhance the management of shared stocks. Some Members suggested that FAO undertake further work in this area.

34. The Committee noted that developing countries face difficulties with regard to capital and technical expertise and have often recourse to the establishment of joint ventures. When established on a sound basis, these enterprises constitute an efficient tool for deriving social and economic benefits from the utilization of the fishery resources of the countries involved. Some Members proposed that FAO carry out a comparative study, based on the contributions of experts from different regions, highlighting their experience with respect to the establishment and operation of the different types of enterprises and evaluating their outcomes and effects on the development of fisheries in the relevant States.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE, BREMEN, GERMANY, 12–16 FEBRUARY 2002

35. The item was introduced by the Chairperson of the Eighth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the Secretariat and discussed on the basis of documents COFI/2003/5 and COFI/2003/Inf.10.

36. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Sub-Committee and the important role played by FAO in the field of fish trade.

37. The Committee endorsed the report of the Eighth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and provided a number of pertinent observations.

38. The increasing role of labelling and traceability of fishery products in international fish trade was highlighted and many countries requested FAO to further work on this topic.

39. Many Members underlined that on the basis of scientific information and with the coordination of governments, FAO should develop guidelines on ecolabelling. This work should advance through the holding of an expert consultation, which will report to the next

meeting of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade to be possibly followed by a technical consultation on this issue. Many Members stressed that ecolabelling should be voluntary, non-discriminatory and transparent. Some Members expressed their deep concern that private ecolabelling schemes and associated traceability schemes, if any, could become a barrier to trade especially if not based on scientific, objective and consistent criteria.

40. Members from developing countries expressed their need for capacity building and institutional strengthening in the field of WTO multilateral trade negotiations. Fish safety and quality in fish trade was highlighted and the countries requested FAO to pursue its work in this field, with particular mention of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), dioxins, residues and fishmeal. The role of the FISH INFOnetwork in this field as well as in marketing was highlighted. The Sub-Committee on Fish Trade was requested to avoid duplication and coordinate with the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, especially with regard to safety and trade of aquaculture products.

41. Many Members expressed serious concern regarding the maintaining of restrictions on trade and use of fishmeal for animal feed, on the grounds of alleged link to the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) since a study on the issue carried out by FAO and resolutely endorsed by the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade indicate that there are no epidemological data linking it to BSE. One Member stated that there was good news and that the said restrictions would be removed as of 1 May 2003. The Committee decided to include this item on the Ninth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and called on the Secretariat to prepare a report on this matter for the meeting.

42. Members underlined the need for collaboration between FAO and the World Customs Organization (WCO) in order to improve the customs classification codes for fish and fishery products. This will include, *inter alia,* improved specification for species from the Southern hemisphere. The development of some form of a unified bar code system, which would help traceability, was mentioned as an interesting option for improving the trade registration system.

43. The Committee indicated that FAO should continue the work on harmonization of catch certification schemes, and this should be put on the agenda of the next COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade. However, the need was noted for careful consideration of differences of fisheries covered by the schemes so as not to hinder normal trade of fish products legally caught.

44. The need was also expressed that, in discussing the issue of trade in fish and fishery products, proper attention be given to the sustainability of the resources.

45. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the generosity of the Hanseatic City of Bremen for hosting the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and welcomed its offer to host the next Session of the Sub-Committee.

46. The open-ended Friends of the Chair Group (the Group) met over seven seatings of the COFI meeting to discuss i) a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for negotiation with CITES, ii) a workplan for the Fisheries Department on CITES and commercially-exploited aquatic species and iii) the terms of reference for an ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel for the assessment of proposals to CITES for such species. The Group agreed on the texts for the terms of reference and the FAO work plan, but there was no consensus on some paragraphs of the draft MOU.

47. In the plenary discussion, the Committee acknowledged the work undertaken by the open-ended Friends of the Chair Group and expressed disappointment that consensus could not be reached on the draft MOU. Many Members expressed their strongly held view that CITES listings of commercially exploited marine species should be limited to exceptional case only since in their view such listings have potentially serious negative consequences for normal fishing activities, particularly those of developing coastal States including small island States and their economies. Other Members noted that any attempt to limit CITES authority to list commercially exploited aquatic species was inappropriate and that CITES has a legitimate role in the regulation of trade in such species while also recognizing FAO's primary role in fisheries management. Some Members also expressed the view that FAO should produce a draft MOU containing a process for increased cooperation without policy pronouncements.

48. The Committee adopted the Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Expert Advisory Panel for Assessment of Proposals to CITES, and the Work Plan as reproduced in Appendixes E and F. It was unable to reach consensus on the text of draft Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and CITES (Appendix G). It was agreed that an open-ended informal group should continue work on the MOU at opportune times including at the Ninth Session of COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade in 2004, and to delegate the authority to finalize a MOU to the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

49. The FAO Secretariat pointed out that the work requested from FAO in relation with CITES will bring with it additional financial obligations that are not covered in the Regular Programme, and that the MOU should have a clause reflecting this and that any role for FAO to negotiate with CITES should be mandated by COFI. The Committee has agreed in its list of priorities in paragraph 104 to persue collaboration with CITES. It also stated its understanding that negotiations with CITES might necessitate changes to an agreed upon draft MOU to accommodate their specific concerns and requirements.

50. The Committee acknowledged the offer by the delegations of Norway and Japan to provide extra-budgetary resources to organize the expert consultations on the "Look alike clause", the application of the phrase "introduction from the sea" listing criteria, and other matters described in Appendix F.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, BEIJING, CHINA, 18-22 APRIL 2002

51. This agenda item was introduced by the Chairman of the first Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Secretariat, and was discussed on the basis of documents COFI/2003/6 and COFI/2003/Inf.11. The Committee endorsed the report of the Sub-Committee and thanked the People's Republic of China and the Government of Italy for hosting and supporting the first Session. The Committee further appreciated the excellent work of the Sub-Committee and the Secretariat.

52. The Committee recognized the importance of aquaculture as a means to increase fishery production, to generate income and foreign exchange, to help restore and relieve pressure on wild populations, to alleviate poverty, to increase food security and to provide for diversification of employment. Many Members have identified the potential of aquaculture and have placed a high priority on its development. There was strong consensus that aquaculture development should be undertaken in an environmentally sustainable manner in line with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and to ensure public health, food safety and quality.

53. The Committee acknowledged that the expertise of FAO will be critical in developing science-based standards for the responsible development of aquaculture from culture to the finished products. Many Members expressed concern regarding the insufficient level of funding for aquaculture activities within FAO and the Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Sub-Committee that additional resources should be allocated to aquaculture in order to implement the recommendations of the Sub-Committee. Increased funds would come from either: i) additional funds to the Fisheries Department overall which would then be allocated to aquaculture, or ii) through increased allocation of funds within the Fisheries Department to aquaculture. Several Members proposed referring the work plan developed by the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture back to the Sub-Committee for its review and to set priorities now that the proposed activities have been costed. Many Members stated that funding should come mainly from regular programme sources, although external donor support will be important. In this regard the offer of Japan to create a Trust Fund for Aquaculture Development was appreciated.

54. The Committee agreed to further discuss issues related to prioritization and additional financial resources for aquaculture activities under agenda item 12 dealing with the FAO Programme of Work and Budget.

55. Members noted that the Sub-Committee should work in harmony with the Sub-Committee on Trade to avoid duplication of activities, and should be an important global forum for technical and institutional issues on aquaculture to ensure long-term sustainability of the sector.

56. The Committee noted the work of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA). Several Members expressed their interest in the establishment of similar mechanisms in the Americas and Pacific Islands and requested the relevant support of FAO for this purpose.

57. Some Members called for technical assistance for the promotion of aquaculture in Africa because it was developing slowly on the continent.

58. The Committee supported continuation of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and thanked Norway for its offer to host the second Session in Norway from 7 to 11 August 2003. The Committee noted that the USA was considering the possibility of hosting the third Session of the Sub-Committee.

OUTCOME OF THE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING INFORMATION ON THE STATUS AND TRENDS OF CAPTURE FISHERIES, ROME, 25-28 MARCH 2002

59. The Rapporteur of the Technical Consultation and the Secretariat introduced document COFI/2003/7 which described the outcome of the Technical Consultation held in March 2002. It was recalled that the Committee on Fisheries at its Twenty-fourth Session had recommended that a technical consultation should be held to consider how fishery status and trends reporting could be improved effectively, including the possible development of a plan of action. The Consultation had unanimously agreed the text of the draft FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries which set forth objectives, guiding principles, required actions and roles. The draft Strategy was designed to provide a

broad framework for the long-term improvement of knowledge and understanding of fishery status and trends as a fundamental basis for fisheries policy and management for the sustainable use of fishery resources within ecosystems.

60. The Consultation had recognized that it would be necessary for FAO and its Members to elaborate programmes to implement the Strategy and suggested that COFI identify approaches to ensure the effective implementation of this Strategy. To this end, the Secretariat had developed a proposal for a project within the FishCode Programme to support implementation of the proposed Strategy. The project proposal should be made available to prospective donors for them to consider for support funding.

61. The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee for Fisheries Research (ACFR) noted that ACFR's previous recommendations had been taken up by the Technical Consultation and expressed satisfaction with the progress made in this high priority area. It was recalled that the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research at its session in December 2002 considered that the Strategy is now even more necessary following WSSD as better information will be needed to monitor progress towards time bound goals for fisheries. ACFR had recognized that the political objectives of the WSSD Implementation Plan would need to be translated into operational objectives towards which progress can be monitored and that FAO would probably be required to report on this in relation to fisheries.

62. The Committee reaffirmed that improved data and information are of fundamental importance for effective policy-making and fisheries management, essential for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and central to the mandate of FAO.

63. The Committee stressed that high priority should be given to capacity-building and the provision of technical assistance to developing countries, as emphasised in the draft Strategy. The particular requirements for the small-scale fisheries sector were emphasised because of its importance to food security and poverty reduction.

64. The Committee recognized the need for improved regional cooperation in improving data and information on status and trends of fisheries and the roles of regional fishery bodies and FAO as stated in the draft Strategy. In this regard, the important role of the FAO Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS) in support of the draft Strategy by facilitating the more systematic assembly of status and trends data and information from the national to the regional and global levels was noted.

65. The Committee approved the draft Strategy, attached as Appendix H, as an important framework for improving information on status and trends of fisheries and recommended its further approval by the FAO Council.

66. The Committee recognized the need for additional funding requirements for implementation of the Strategy and endorsed the proposal to seek extra-budgetary funds from donors for projects implementating the Strategy under the FishCode Programme. Some Members proposed that the Strategy should be funded through the Regular Programme. In this context, the United States of America informed the Committee that it would contribute to the implementation of the Strategy by funding a pilot project in the Caribbean. Japan also indicated its intention to provide financial assistance while stressing the necessity of cost efficiency in the implemention of the Strategy.

67. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat should monitor the implementation of the Strategy as an integral component of monitoring implementation of the Code of Conduct and its related instruments, and report back regularly to COFI. It was proposed that ACFR act as the review mechanism for this purpose.

68. Many Members renewed their commitments to supply or make readily available information on their fisheries and to participate in the proposed Strategy. Several Members noted their desire that FAO provide assistance on methodology and training. It was noted that in relation to inland fisheries in developing countries, a major effort would be required.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FAO EXPERT CONSULTATION ON IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING AND REPORTING ON SUBSIDIES IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY, ROME, 3–6 DECEMBER 2002

69. The Secretariat introduced the Agenda item on the basis of document COFI/2003/8. Attention was drawn to the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Report of the Expert Consultation on Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fishing Industry, Rome Italy from 3 to 6 December 2002 (COFI/2003/Inf. 12). The Secretariat also provided information on the recent work of the Fisheries Department on subsidies in fisheries. Guidance was sought from the Committee with regards to the direction and scope of future work. In addition, the Committee was requested to consider whether or not the Fisheries Department should organize a technical consultation on subsidies in the fisheries sector as suggested at the Twenty-fourth Session of COFI.

70. The Committee appreciated the work undertaken by the Secretariat on this issue and noted the Report of the Expert Consultation as well as the conclusions and recommendations contained therein.

71. Reconfirming the importance of the subsidies issue, especially in the light of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (the Johannesburg Summit 2002) and the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference (Doha), the Committee urged FAO to accelerate its work in relation to the impact of subsidies on fisheries resource sustainability and sustainable development. The Committee encouraged FAO to continue its leading role in promoting cooperation and coordination with other relevant intergovernmental organizations such as the WTO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and others in the field of fisheries.

72. The Committee agreed that the guide Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fisheries Sector prepared by FAO and reviewed by the expert consultation provides a useful technical tool. Many Members pointed out that the guide was still too theoretical and that FAO should undertake more practical work in the classification and evaluation of subsidies and their impact on the fisheries sector, particularly using case studies based on the framework provided by the guide. Some Members suggested that this work be undertaken in time to be useful for the proposed Technical Consultation. Other Members noted that more time was required to study the guide and suggested that it be included in the discussion at the Technical Consultation.

73. The Committee agreed with the Japanese proposal that FAO should convene a Technical Consultation on this issue to be held immediately after the meeting on IUU fishing and fleet overcapacity in early 2004 in Rome (paragraph 23) in order to receive maximum

benefit from participation of fisheries management officials in addition to trade officials. In this Consultation, attention should be given to a practical mandate to consider the effects of subsidies on fisheries resources, such as effects on IUU fishing and overcapacity. Many Members recommended that the Technical Consultation should take into account the impacts of subsidies on sustainable development, trade in fish and fishery products, food security, social security and poverty alleviation, especially in the context of recognizing the special needs of developing countries and small island developing States as recognized in international instruments.

74. The Technical Consultation should also consider the ways the FAO can support the WTO's work on fisheries subsidies, noting the independence of the WTO timetable.

75. Developing countries agreed on the need to work effectively towards reducing subsidies that affect the sustainability of fishery resources and expressed their concern over the impact that subsidies that were harmful to the international trade of their fishery products could have on their economic development. A large number of developing countries emphasized that, when appraising the role of subsidies in their fishery sectors, careful attention also needed to be given to their impact on the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development and, in particular, on their use as an instrument of economic policy aimed, among other objectives, at stimulating the sustainable growth of their national fishery sectors, at reducing and alleviating the poverty of fishing communities and households and at enhancing food security.

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE SUSTAINABLE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

76. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/2003/9. The Committee commended the Secretariat for the quality of the document and endorsed the analysis presented and the strategies proposed. It applauded FAO's initiative to treat the small-scale fisheries sector as a stand-alone agenda item for the Committee's attention, as was also appreciated by the last Session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research. Many Members remarked that the small-scale fisheries sector made a crucial social and economic contribution to a country. In this context, the important role of women in small-scale fish processing and marketing activities was highlighted. It was also noted that small-scale fisheries in many developing countries and small island developing States requiree high amounts of foreign exchange which in most cases is not available from national financial institutions.

77. The Committee noted the high vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities to the impacts of natural catastrophes and the high risks associated with small-scale fishing operations. It also recognized that small scale fishing communities are faced with an array of serious problems, including: rapid population growth, migration of populations, overexploitation of resources, lack of alternative sources of employment, displacement in coastal areas due to industrial development and tourism, pollution and environmental degradation. It was also noted that small-scale fisheries are critical for food security and poverty reduction and that they are often omitted from priority listings of many national development programmes and as such their contributions to food security and poverty reduction are often overlooked. Such problems can pose particularly acute challenges to small island developing States and others very dependent on inshore fishery resources.

78. Many Members commented that conflicts with large commercial fishing operations are also commonly encountered. These conflicts occur especially in nearshore areas but also include cases of competition over straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

79. Many Members observed that globalisation had both positive and negative effects. Improved trading opportunities and access to technology and know-how needed to be carefully balanced with the requirements of ensuring adequate domestic food supplies, equitable participation in economic activities.

80. The Committee recognized that certain current policies do not always treat small-scale fisheries in accordance with the sector's importance to national economic and social development and, in particular, its contribution to food security and poverty reduction. It further recognized that small-scale fisheries have often been overlooked in the formulation of national poverty reduction strategies.

81. The Committee stressed that better understanding of the causes of vulnerability and poverty in small-scale fisheries, and improved information on the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation were essential to the development of strategies for enhancing the role of the sector in fostering national social and economic welfare. Such strategies need to be based on improved cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration, including closer coordination of multilateral and bilateral development assistance.

82. The Committee recognized the valuable experiences reported by several Members in enhancing the social and economic contributions of small-scale fisheries. Substantial achievements have been realized through such measures as constitutional recognition of the rights and interests of small-scale fishers and legislative and other provisions to strengthen their participation in policy and management decision-making processes. Other enabling measures have been the allocation of exclusive fishing zones for small-scale fishers and provision of education including literacy and leadership training.

83. Many Members noted with appreciation the technical and financial assistance that has been provided in support of small-scale fisheries by the international community. However, the Committee strongly advocated that more efforts be made to support the small-scale fisheries sector, both inland and marine. Such efforts should take into account positive experiences that have been gained through the use of self-management and co-management approaches that are based on traditional knowledge, local circumstances and well-defined user rights systems.

84. The Committee requested that FAO allocate more resources to promote sustainable small-scale fisheries. It further welcomed the suggestion for the Organization to elaborate, in the context of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, technical guidelines on increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation. Such guidelines should, *inter alia*, stress the importance of national fisheries development strategies that promote good governance and inclusiveness, thereby creating a sense of ownership and accountability by small-scale stakeholders in the decision-making process. Members agreed that appropriate avenues towards this goal included the encouragement of fishermen's organizations at community level and the facilitation of their representation at local, regional and national levels.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TO ACHIEVE RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES RESOURCES AND TO RESTORE FISHERIES RESOURCES AND THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

85. The Secretariat referred the Committee to documents COFI/2003/10, COFI/2003/Inf.13 and 14, the advance copy of the FAO Technical Guidelines and the review of the issue to be published soon as an FAO Fisheries Technical Paper, and described the progress made in developing and implementing the approach since the Twenty-fourth Session of COFI.

86. Noting, *inter alia*, the Reykjavik Declaration on Marine Ecoystems, the Secretariat referred to the close relationship between fishing and the ecosystem, including the need to consider the impact of fishing on the ecosystem and the impact of the ecosystem on fishing. It stressed that the ecosystem approach to fisheries was an extension of conventional fisheries management as embedded, *inter alia*, in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. In inviting the Committee's views on the approach and future activities, the Secretariat drew attention to the target dates set by the WSSD, including the implementation of ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) by 2010.

87. Many Members complimented FAO on the progress it had made in advancing the EAF concept and provided their full support to the approach. The Committee noted that many Members were already addressing several aspects of EAF. Some Members noted in this context that they were already addressing the impact on associated species, bycatch (e.g., turtles, seabirds and sharks) and selectivity of fishing gear, spatial and temporal closures, marine protected areas, stakeholder involvement in fisheries management, restocking, restoring of critical habitats and species interactions. One Member cited as an example culling jelly fish in the Caspian Sea.

88. Many Members noted that the term "Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries", as considered by the Expert Consultation, characterized the broad holistic and integrated nature of the approach. The need to adopt effectively a more holistic and integrated approach to fisheries management was indeed stressed by many Members, including the need to consider a broader range of issues that had impact on fisheries, including the impacts of pollution, coastal development and other land-based practices. The linkage between integrated coastal areas and EEZ management as well as the management of large marine ecosystems was also noted. Several Members drew the Committee's attention to the coral reef issue and requested FAO, especially the Committee, to give due consideration to the sustainable management of the world's coral reefs and take them into account in the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

89. In recognizing the complexity of ecosystems, the need for further data and research on many topics relating to EAF was noted by many Members. Some Members, in particular Members from developing countries, expressed concern and cautioned about the increased complexity, costs and difficulty in implementing ecosystem considerations in fisheries management, and re-iterated the need for technical assistance and support to avoid broadening the gap between Members from developing and developed countries. It was generally agreed, however, that although the approach needed further clarification, many of its aspects could already be introduced into current fisheries management practices.

90. The linkage between EAF and small-scale fisheries management was recognized. The Committee suggested that FAO, through case studies on small-scale fisheries, develop an

adopted EAF tool box with rapid appraisal techniques, participatory processes, conflict resolution, integrated resource, assessment and management, including co-management, and capacity-building.

91. Many Members reconfirmed their strong support for paragraph 39 of the report of the Twenty-fourth Session of COFI. Researches on the subject of interactions between marine mammals and fisheries were described. Many Members supported the need for continuing research and the further development of ecosystem models while other Members noted that EAF was wider than just predator/prey relations and possible mammal impacts. Some Members expressed the view that low priority be given to predator/prey relations, and their impact on fish resources, as opposed to other aspects of relevance, such as reduced bycatch, habitat protection, land-based impacts, climatic changes, etc. Some Members noted the primacy of the International Whaling Commission with respect to the role of whales in the marine environment and the strongly held view that discussions on whales in COFI detracted from the more important fisheries issues such as IUU fishing.

92. Many Members considered the Technical Guidelines an important step in implementing EAF while other Members noted their preliminary status. Several Members considered that the reference to various ecosystem manipulations including culling was not warranted for a range of reasons including uncertainty in ecosystem functioning. Several Members also expressed the view that the extension of the precautionary approach to include social or economic outcomes was not consistent with internationally accepted definitions including at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and reconfirmed at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and were therefore unacceptable in their view.

93. The Committee supported the role of FAO in facilitating the process of adoption of the ecosystem approach as agreed during the WSSD. A range of additional activities were suggested, including clearer definition of the terminology, evaluation of its legal implications, implementation of case studies, better analysis of social and economic objectives, development of ecosystem-related indicators, reference points and decision rules and deeper analysis of bioecological issues. It was stressed that in undertaking these activities fishers should be seen as integral component of aquatic ecosystems, taking into account the social and economic impact. Many Members stressed the need for FAO to partner in this endeavour with other organizations, especially those within the UN system to further this work and improve the guidelines. It was also suggested that closer cooperation on the approach with regional fishery organizations would improve consensus and generate more sense of ownership of the Technical Guidelines on the part of those in charge of their implementation.

94. In that respect, the Secretariat informed the Committee of the ongoing cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission–Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (IOC-SCOR) Working Group on Quantitative Ecosystem Indicators for Fisheries Management. The Secretariat also confirmed that all comments made during this session of the Committee would be duly considered in the future process of improvement of the Guidelines.

REVIEW OF MAJOR PROGRAMME 2.3 FISHERIES

95. The Review of the Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries was introduced by the Secretariat which clarified concepts and terms used in the two documents COFI/2003/11 and COFI/2003/12 as well as providing illustrative examples of priority settings in the Fisheries

Department. It was pointed out that the Strategic Framework 2000–15 provides the authoritative framework for the Organization's future programmes, which are developed through successive Medium Term Plans and Programmes of Work and Budget. The Medium Term is of rolling nature and will be updated every two years to reflect evolving contexts.

96. No major changes have been introduced in the Fisheries Programme for the Medium Term Plan. The Major Programme for Fisheries continued to give due prominence for the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the International Plans of Action (IPOAs) endorsed by COFI and the instruments which provide the framework for national policies to pursue responsible and sustainable development in fisheries and aquaculture. The Major Programme covers a broad range of advisory services related to the management, development, marketing and use of fisheries and aquaculture resources.

97. Relatively few changes have been introduced to the programme structure and no reallocations had taken place among programmes. It was underlined that the Medium Term Plan for the Fisheries Programme had been formulated under a growth scenario, and that it was likely that the approved budget for 2004–05 and beyond would be significantly lower in which case the programme of work would need to be adjusted accordingly.

98. Furthermore, it was emphasized that by the Secretariat that from 2006 onwards increased resources (amounting to US$ 4.2 million) had been requested by the Fisheries Department for funding of additional activities related to ecosystem considerations in fisheries and aquaculture which could not be implemented within the proposed budget of the Medium Term Plan.

99. The Secretariat advised the Committee that with expanded funding, part but not all of the funding required for the proposed programme of work of the Sub-Committtee on Aquaculture would be available.

100. Referring to the perpetual call by governing bodies for increased allocations to the Fisheries Programme and bearing in mind the highly important role of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related instruments as explicitly cited in the WSSD 2002 Plan of Implementation, the Secretariat considered the growth scenario presented in the Medium Term Plan as a reasonably acceptable starting point for a progressive and well balanced Fisheries Programme.

101. The Secretariat informed about budgetary procedures related to the Medium Term Plan. It was stressed that the Medium Term Plan for 2004–2005 anticipated an 11 percent increase for Fisheries Department which reflects the preferential treatment given to the fisheries programme.

102. Many Members expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for increased transparency in their reporting and planning documents in COFI/2003/11 and COFI/2003/12. Satisfaction was also expressed for the achievements of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries during the last biennium despite restricted budgets. The Secretariat was requested to produce more reader friendly documents that focus on the more important issues of the PWB and called for increased emphasis on outcomes rather than on the record of activities.

103. Some Members identified the need to expand the sources of funding for the Fisheries Programme through partnerships or associations with other international organizations such as IFIs, GEF and IOC. The Secretariat noted there has already been some progress in this area.

104. Members expressed concern about priority settings and the real budget which would be made available for 2004–05. The Committee identified the following priority areas which are listed in no particular order:

- promotion of aquaculture and inland fisheries in food security;
- strengthening of regional fishery bodies in particular to appropriately assist developing countries in improving their fisheries management;
- implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments such as International Plans of Actions as well as elaboration of technical guidelines;
- pursue collaboration with CITES;
- support sustainable small-scale fisheries and their better inclusion within the formulation of poverty reduction strategies;
- working on the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management;
- implementation of the strategy for improving status and trend reporting; and
- maintaining the fisheries library.

The Committee stressed, as a matter of principle, that the priorities identified by COFI should be reflected in the PWB.

105. Although Members idendified work on ecosystem approach to fisheries management as a priority, many Members stressed the importance of studying the interactions between predators and prey, while other Members emphasized that the work referred to above should be holistic and address all the relevant aspects of the ecosystem. Some Members noted that the work on the interactions between predators and prey was not a priority.

106. It was recommended that deep sea fisheries should be included in the agenda at the next Session of COFI recognizing that these species require conservation and management at international level.

107. The Committee appreciated that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean presented a Declaration, which acknowledged FAO's efforts in resource distribution, in particular for projects of development and generation of food, and which stressed that such resources and projects needed to be distributed equitably if they were to address the needs and priorities of all the regions of the world, especially those made up of developing countries. The Declaration stated that these regions needed the support of the international community, and of FAO in particular, to promote the development of sustainable fisheries and the generation of food, and recognized that there were specific areas of Latin American and Caribbean countries that required determined action on the part of the international community and FAO for poverty alleviation and to meet food requirements. In this connection, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean called for more equitable treatment in the allocation of resources and the promotion of development projects, both in the Programme of Work and Budget of the Fisheries Department, and from FAO in general.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

108. The Committee welcomed the decision of the Government of Mexico to provide additional financial resources to the Trust Fund that had been set up to help FAO award the Margarita Lizárraga Medal to individuals or organizations that had distinguished themselves in the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. This initial contribution by the Government of Mexico would be followed up by annual extrabudgetary allocations to ensure the continuity of the Medal. The Delegation of Mexico urged all Member governments of FAO to join this initiative and thus provide additional funds to the Trust Fund.

109. The delegation of Japan reiterated the offer it made at the Twenty-fourth Session of COFI to organize a Conference on the Management and Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Antarctic with the objective to discuss sustainable use of the Antarctic fishery resources for the benefit of humankind especially of developing countries and informed the Committee that the Conference would be held in the near future.

110. The Committee noted that IUU fishing continues to adversely affect the sustainable management of fisheries and that without the political will it would be difficult for many countries to develop national plans of action called for in paragraph 25 of the IPOA–IUU by 2004 or to adopt measures to deter, reduce and eliminate IUU fishing. The Committee recommended that IUU fishing be included in the agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the FAO Conference with a view to calling attention of Members to this issue.

111. The United States of America informed the Committee of an initiative it had undertaken at WSSD called "White Water to Blue Water", a watershed and coastal zone management project initially involving a variety of Caribbean countries and other partners.

112. Japan considers that FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 401 entitled "Understanding the Cultures of Fishery Communities", published in 2001, is a good reference for the discussion of small-scale fisheries. Japan advised its initiatives in hosting the "International Symposium of Multiple Roles and Functions of Fisheries and Fishing Communities" at Aomori, Japan, in February 2003.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

113. It was agreed that the Committee should meet in Rome in early 2005. The exact date would be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

114. The report was adopted on 28 February 2003.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session

2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session

3. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and designation of Drafting Committee

4. Achievements of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries 2000–2002

5. Progress Report on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Related International Plans of Action (Capacity, IUU Fishing, Seabirds and Sharks) and Making Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) of fishing vessels more effective

6. Decisions and Recommendations of the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Bremen, Germany, 12–16 February 2002

7. Decisions and Recommendations of the First Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Beijing, China, 18–22 April 2002

8. Outcome of the Technical Consultation on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries, Rome, 25–28 March 2002

9. Conclusions and Recommendations of the FAO Expert Consultation on Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fishing Industry, Rome, Italy, 3–6 December 2002

10. Strategies for Increasing the Sustainable Contribution of Small-Scale Fisheries to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

11. Implementation of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management to Achieve Responsible Fisheries and to Restore Fisheries Resources and Marine Environments

12. Review of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries
    - Planned Activities over the Period 2004–2009, as regards Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries
    - Preliminary Information on Programme of Work and Budget Proposals for 2004–2005, as regards Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries: for discussion and decision

13. Any Other Matters

14. Date and Place of the next Session

15. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

LIST OF DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

COFI/2003/1	Agenda and Timetable
COFI/2003/2	Achievements of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries 2000–2002
COFI/2003/3 Rev.1	Progress in the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related International Plans of Action
COFI/2003/4	Making Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of Fishing Vessels more Effective
COFI/2003/5	Decisions and Recommendations of the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade
COFI/2003/6	Decisions and Recommendations of the First Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture
COFI/2003/7	Outcome of the Technical Consultation on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries
COFI/2003/8	Conclusions and Recommendations of the FAO Expert Consultation on Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fishing Industry
COFI/2003/9	Strategies for Increasing the Sustainable Contribution of Small-scale Fisheries to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation
COFI/2003/10	Implementation of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management to Achieve Responsible Fisheries and to Restore Fisheries Resources and Marine Environments
COFI/2003/11	Planned Activities for the Period 2004–2009, as regards Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries
COFI/2003/12	Preliminary Information on Programme of Work and Budget Proposals for 2004–2005, as regards Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries

COFI/2003/Inf.1	List of Documents
COFI/2003/Inf.2	List of Participants
COFI/2003/Inf.3	Statement by the Deputy Director-General
COFI/2003/Inf.4	Annotations/Guide Notes on Agenda Items
COFI/2003/Inf.5	Report of the Twenty-fourth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 26 February – 2 March 2001
COFI/2003/Inf.6	Follow-up to the Recommendations of the Twenty-fourth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 26 February – 2 March 2001
COFI/2003/Inf.7	Report of the Expert Consultation on Catalysing the Transition away from Overcapacity in Marine Capture Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 15-18 October 2002
COFI/2003/Inf.8	Report of the Expert Consultation to Review Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing, Rome, Italy, 4-6 November 2002
COFI/2003/Inf.9	Report of the Norway-FAO Expert Consultation on the Management of Shared Fish Stocks, Bergen, Norway, 7-10 October 2002
COFI/2003/Inf.10	Report of the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Bremen, Germany, 12-16 February 2002

COFI/2003/Inf.11	Report of the First Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Beijing, China, 18-22 April 2002
COFI/2003/Inf.12	Report of the Expert Consultation on Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fishing Industry, Rome, Italy, 3-6 December 2002
COFI/2003/Inf.13	Report of the Expert Consultation on Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management, Reykjavik, Iceland, 16-19 September 2002
COFI/2003/Inf.14	The World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 and its implications for Fisheries
COFI/2003/Inf.15	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Community

APPENDIX D

OPENING STATEMENT BY MR DAVID A. HARCHARIK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to the Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI).

It is enheartening to see so many Governments represented here today, but also several inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. Your presence here confirms not only the ever-increasing importance of fisheries in the world, but also the role of COFI as a global forum for addressing the many critical challenges confronting the sector.

It is a pleasure to note in this respect, that the excellent achievements of the Committee were recognized by the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002. The Johannesburg Plan expressly highlights the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related International Plans of Action (IPOAs), as well as the Technical Guidelines for the implementation of the Code, which COFI has so actively crafted and promoted over the years. Congratulations.

Since your last session, a new Director for Fishery Policy and Planning, Mr Jean-François Pulvénis de Séligny Maurel, has been appointed. He is well known to many of you due to his participation in several sessions of the Committee as the Head of the Delegation of his country, Venezuela. Mr Pulvénis has an extensive background in fisheries, and is already contributing as a strong member of FAO's fisheries team. Also on the podium today are Assistant Director-General, Mr Ichiro Nomura, and his close associates of the Fisheries Department, whom I believe need no introduction.

Mr Chairman,

We have tried to construct an agenda for your meeting that would allow you the oppurtunity of considering a selection of the most important fisheries issues that have arisen since your last session. One of those is the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries as the basic global reference tool for the sustainable development and management of fisheries and aquaculture. While there have been some successes in the application of the Code, much still needs to be done. I hope your deliberations will lead to the identification of mechanisms and stratcgies to overcome the constraints that still hinder effective implementation of the Code and its related instruments.

Another priority concern is illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and inappropriate control of fishing vessels seriously jeopardize the transition to responsible fisheries in many regions of the world. The Committee is asked to exchange experiences on ways and means of achieving enhanced monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) of fishing operations, including the use of new technologies for vessel monitoring systems (VMS) that are cost effective and efficient.

Mr Chairman,

The Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, at its Eighth Session, reviewed important recent events and issues concerning international trade, and is seeking guidance from COFI particularly with regard to CITES and fish trade related issues, safety and quality, as well as the traceability of fish products. We appreciate the valuable support and assistance of the Government of Germany in facilitating the work of the Sub-Committee, and we look forward to COFI's guidance on the issues addressed by the Sub-Committee.

At its last Session COFI decided to establish a Sub-Committee on Aquaculture to provide a forum for consultation and discussion on this rapidly growing and vitally important food-producing sector. As a result of the kind hospitality of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and the financial support of the Government of Italy, the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture was held in Beijing in April 2002. We would appreciate COFI's counsel on how to fund activities in the priority areas identified at the First Session.

Over the past four years, the Committee has been discussing the problem of fishery status and trends reporting. Indeed, vastly improved information is now required in order to monitor progress towards the goals for fisheries set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation – namely: the restoration of depleted stocks, the application of the ecosystem approach in fisheries, the implementation of the IPOAs on fishing capacity and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and global reporting and assessment of marine environments. Approval of the Draft Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries by your Committee would greatly contribute towards the attainment of required information, and hence towards the common goal of obtaining the fullest benefits from the world's fisheries without compromising long-term sustainability.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our efforts to help Members develop and manage their fisheries and aquaculture are part of a greater endeavour to improve livelihoods in local communities. The Committee has had a continuing concern for this very important sub-sector. Your guidance on how to improve the role of small-scale fisheries for food security and poverty alleviation will be received with great interest.

In recent years, the ecosystem approach has taken centre stage in international fisheries and is likely to be even more important in the years ahead. The Committee addressed this issue at its last session, in planning for the Reykjavik Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem. That Conference, organised in collaboration with the Government of Iceland and cosponsored by Norway, was held in October 2001. It culminated in the adoption of the Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem. The ecosystem approach to fisheries was again flagged at the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002. The Committee may wish to suggest ways and means to promote the application of ecosystem approaches to the management of fisheries at national and regional levels.

It is also important to highlight the need for human capacity-building and institutional strengthening related to fisheries, an issue that has been stressed by the Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture and given prominence at the Fourth Session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) in December 2002. Without training or access to facilities and skilled instructors and analysts, and without effective support for on-the-job experience, it

would be virtually impossible to achieve improved and sustainable fisheries productivity and to meet the targets set in our Programme of Work and Budget and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We appeal to governments, donors, partner agencies and organizations to support and collaborate with us as we strive to improve human and institutional capacity in the fisheries sector.

Mr Chairman,

The outcome of your deliberations on all of these major issues of concern in world fisheries will help frame your recommendations on the formulation of the FAO Programme of Work and Budget 2004–2005.

The achievement of our objectives in fisheries, and the fulfilment of our Members' expectations depend on adequate financial resources for the Fisheries Department's Regular Programme but also on extra-budgetary contributions to Field Programme activities. Of particular importance in this regard are FishCode, the Fisheries Department's global partnership programme for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme. These Trust Fund initiatives have received important contributions from the Governments of Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those Governments, as well as all other Governments, organizations and agencies that have provided resources to fisheries activities. I should also like to appeal strongly for increased contributions and support.

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although the Committee has a full agenda, I hope that delegates will be able to find time to participate in the series of side events that have been organized in parallel with the Session, and also to visit the exhibition in the Atrium.

In concluding, I wish to assure you that FAO greatly values your experienced advice and good counsel. I wish you a constructive and highly successful Session.

Thank you.

APPENDIX E

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AD HOC EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL FOR ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS TO CITES

(Adopted by COFI, see paragraph 48)

1. FAO will establish an ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend CITES Appendices I and II.

2. The Panel shall be established by the FAO Secretariat in advance of each Conference of the Parties, according to its standard rules and procedures and observing, as appropriate, the principle of equitable geographical representation, drawing from a roster of recognized experts, to be established, consisting of scientific and technical specialists in commercially-exploited aquatic species.

3. The Panel members shall participate in the Panel in their personal capacity as experts, and not as representatives of governments or organizations.

4. The Panel will consist of a core group of no more than 10 experts, supplemented for each proposal by up to 10 specialists on the species being considered and aspects of fisheries management relevant to that species.

5. For each proposal the Panel shall:

- assess each proposal from a scientific perspective in accordance with the CITES biological listing criteria, taking account of the recommendations on the criteria made to CITES by FAO;
- comment, as appropriate, on technical aspects of the proposal in relation to biology, ecology, trade and management issues, as well as, to the extent possible, the likely effectiveness for conservation.

6. In preparing its report, the Panel will consider the information contained in the proposal and any additional information received by the specified deadline from FAO Members and relevant RFMOs. In addition, it may ask for comments on any proposed amendment, or any aspect of a proposed amendment, from an expert who is not a member of the Panel if it so decides.

7. The Advisory Panel shall make a report based on its assessment and review, providing information and advice as appropriate on each listing proposal. The Panel shall finalize the advisory report no later than ?? days[1] before the start of the CITES Conference of the Parties where the proposed amendment will be addressed. The advisory report shall be distributed as soon as it is finalized to all members of FAO, and to the CITES Secretariat with a request that they distribute it to all CITES Parties.

8. The general sequence of events will be as follows:

- Proposals received by CITES
- Proposals forwarded by CITES Secretariat to FAO

[1] To be discussed with the CITES Secretariat

- FAO forwards proposals to FAO Members and RFMOs and notifies them of deadline for receipt of comments
- Member and RFMO comments and input received by FAO
- Panel meets and prepares advisory report on each proposal
- Panel report reviewed by FAO Secretariat and forwarded to FAO Members, RFMOs and CITES Secretariat.

APPENDIX F

FAO WORKPLAN
ON CITES AND COMMERCIALLY-EXPLOITED AQUATIC SPECIES
(Adopted by COFI, see paragraph 48)

The Twenty-fifth Session of COFI agreed on the following guidelines for an experts' process to be followed by the FAO Secretariat.

i) One Expert Consultation should be convened to address the following issues:

- CITES Article II Fundamental Principles, Paragraph 2(b), the "look-alike" clause;
- Annex 3 of CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 Criteria for Amendment of Appendices I and II, which deals with split-listing; and aquaculture issues as a group, noting the inter-relationships in these topics.
- Administrative and monitoring implications of listing and down-listing, including the implications of Annex 4 of Res. Conf. 9.24 for this. It was agreed that this should also include an analysis of the socio-economic impact of listing on sturgeon, queen conch and a number of hypothetical listing proposals. It was suggested that participants to this consultation include those with direct experience in implementation of CITES regulations for such cases.

A second Expert Consultation should be convened to address:

- Applications of the phrase "introduction from the sea" in the definition of trade in Article I of the CITES Convention text, including consideration of the administrative costs associated with the various interpretations of this term.
- An analysis of the legal implications of the existing CITES listing criteria and the CITES Convention itself in relation to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and related international law covering fisheries, and of any changes in those implications resulting from adoption of the proposals included in Appendix F to the Report of the FAO Second Technical Consultation.

ii) FAO should continue to monitor and participate, where appropriate, in the on-going CITES process to amend Resolution Conf. 9.24, with a view to facilitating further progress.

APPENDIX G

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) AND THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES)
(No consensus was reached on this text, see paragraph 48)

RECOGNIZING the primary role of sovereign States, FAO and regional fisheries management organizations in fisheries conservation and management,

RECOGNIZING further that the mission of FAO with respect to fisheries is to facilitate and secure the long-term sustainable development and utilization of the world's fisheries and aquaculture resources,

NOTING IN PARTICULAR FAO's three medium-term strategic objectives for fisheries namely: - Promotion of Responsible Fisheries Sector Management with priority given to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, Compliance Agreement, International Plans of Action, - Promotion of Increased Contribution of Responsible Fisheries and Aquaculture to World Food Supplies and Food Security and, - Global Monitoring and Strategic Analysis of Fisheries.

RECOGNIZING also the role of CITES in regulating international trade in species threatened with extinction which are or may be affected by international trade and those that may become threatened with extinction unless international trade in specimens of such species is subject to strict regulation as well as other species which must be subject to regulation in order that international trade in specimens of certain species threatened with extinction may be brought under effective control,

RECOGNIZING further that for marine species, the CITES Secretariat has an obligation to consult inter-governmental bodies having a function in relation to those species "especially with a view to obtaining scientific data" and "to ensuring co-ordination with any conservation measures enforced by such bodies."

TAKING account of the results of the 8th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Fish Trade held in Bremen, Germany from 12 – 16 February 2002 (which was endorsed by the Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in Rome from 24 to 28 February 2003) and in particular Paragraph 18 and Appendix F of the report of that meeting (FAO Fisheries Report No. 673) [and the view that CITES listings of commercially exploited aquatic resources should be limited to exceptional cases only and when all relevant bodies associated with the management of the species in question agree that such a listing would be advantageous].

NOTING that CITES cannot replace traditional fisheries management and the particular importance of consulting all relevant bodies associated with the management of the species when considering amendments to CITES appendices

ALSO TAKING account of the Decision of the 12th Conference of the Parties to CITES regarding the development of an MOU to establish a framework for cooperation between CITES and FAO,

BELIEVING that there is a need to strengthen the process in CITES for scientific evaluation of proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II concerning commercially-exploited aquatic species and improve communication between fisheries agencies and CITES authorities at the national level .

FAO AND CITES IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THEM HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Fisheries Department of FAO and the CITES Standing Committee will send each other general information of common interest.

2. FAO will be invited as an observer to meetings under the auspices of CITES or its Committees that are of common interest and CITES will be invited as an observer to meetings of common interest held by the Fisheries Department of FAO, the FAO Committee on Fisheries or its subcommittees.

3. FAO and CITES will cooperate as appropriate to promote capacity building in developing countries for issues relating to commercially-exploited aquatic species listed on CITES appendices.

4. FAO will continue to provide advice to CITES and be involved in the process of revision of the CITES listing criteria.

5. CITES will inform FAO of all proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II concerning commercially-exploited aquatic species related to those species. Such information shall be provided to FAO as soon as possible to allow FAO to carry out a scientific and technical review of such proposals in a manner it deems appropriate and for the resulting output to be transmitted to the CITES Secretariat who will consider it in its deliberations to provide recommendations to the Parties to CITES regarding such proposals.

6. In order to ensure coordination of conservation measures, CITES will incorporate to the greatest extent possible the results of the FAO scientific and technical review of proposals to amend the Appendices, the responses from all the relevant bodies associated with management of the species in question, as well as the substance of the preambular paragraphs of this memorandum in its advice and recommendations to the CITES Parties. [In particular, this shall include the position that CITES listings of commercially exploited aquatic resources should be limited to exceptional cases only and when all relevant bodies associated with the management of the species in question agree that such a listing would be advantageous.]

This Memorandum may be cancelled by either signatory by giving notice to the other in writing at any time.

Director General, FAO _____ Date: _____

Chair, Standing Committee of CITES _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX H

STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING INFORMATION ON STATUS AND TRENDS OF CAPTURE FISHERIES

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Knowledge of the status and trends of capture fisheries and fishery resources, including socio-economic aspects, is a key to sound policy-making and responsible fisheries management. It is necessary at the national level for the maintenance of food security and for describing social and economic benefits of fisheries. Fisheries policy-making and management is a dynamic interdisciplinary process that needs to take account of the status and trends of fisheries. Information on the status and trends of fisheries is also essential for assessing the validity of fisheries policy and for tracking the performance of fisheries management.

2. There is a high level of public interest for information on the status and trends of fisheries. More accurate and timely information should result in a better-informed public that supports efforts to manage fisheries in a responsible manner. Disseminating timely and readily understandable information on the status and trends of fisheries should help to ensure transparency in fisheries management, as called for by the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Paragraphs 6.13 and 7.1.9).

3. Application of the precautionary approach, based on the best scientific evidence available, is a key element of efforts to achieve responsible fisheries. This requires making information on the status and trends of fisheries available in a manner that supports policy making and fisheries management.

4. Information on the status and trends of fisheries is either needed for, or consistent with, many international instruments concerning fisheries, including:

- the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 which establishes the need to take account of the best scientific evidence available; the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks 1995 which specifies responsibilities for collecting and exchanging data necessary for stock assessments, including provisions for transparency (Article 12);
- FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas 1993 which requires the exchange of some information on fishing vessels (Article VI);
- Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (hereafter referred to as the Code of Conduct) which calls for use of the best scientific evidence available, bilateral and multilateral cooperation in research and data collection (Article 6.4), regional mechanisms for cooperation to compile and exchange data (including information on socio-economic factors, Article 7.4), and publication and dissemination of results (Article 12);
- FAO International Plans of Action (IPOA) for implementing various aspects of the Code of Conduct, such as the IPOA for the Management of Fishing Capacity, which broadens the scope of the needed information on the status and trends of fisheries, to include measures of fishing capacity;

- The Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in Marine Ecosystems, which calls for greater consideration of ecosystems, thus implying that the scope of status and trends information should be further expanded to reflect ecosystem considerations;
- Commission for Sustainable Development, as called for by UNCED in Chapter 40 of Agenda 21, which requires States to report on sustainability indicators, which are likely to be partially based on fisheries status and trends information;
- International Conventions, such as the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) (1973) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), which call for the collection and exchange of information on the status of biota;
- International Programmes, including the (a) United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), (b) United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, (c) Large Marine Ecosystem projects sponsored by the Global Environmental Facility, (d) Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics, and (e) Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which call for, or need, fisheries information; and
- Most countries have revised their national legislation to align it with various international instruments such as those above, and promoting sustainable fisheries at the national level requires improved status and trends information.

5. The Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries was approved by consensus at the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) on 28 February 2003. It may be referred to as the FAO Fishery Status and Trends Strategy.

PART 2: NATURE AND SCOPE

Nature of the Strategy

6. This Strategy has been elaborated within the framework of the Code of Conduct, as envisaged by Article 2 (d) and (e). The provisions of Article 3 of the Code of Conduct apply to the interpretation and application of this document and its relationship with other instruments. All concerned Members and non-members of FAO and fishing entities are encouraged to support its implementation.

7. This Strategy applies to the assembly and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries. Data collection and research needs for monitoring the status and trends of fisheries are established by other international instruments, such as those noted in Paragraph 4 and existing obligations of States to report fisheries statistics to FAO under Article XI of the FAO Constitution. While this Strategy does not establish new legal obligations, it does propose to significantly invigorate data collection and research and it provides impetus for fulfilling those that already exist. This impetus should include additional support from relevant international organizations, whether governmental or non-governmental, and financial institutions (development partner agencies) for capacity building in developing countries.

8. In this Strategy, the reference to States includes the European Community in matters within its competence.

Scope of the Strategy

9. The Strategy is global in scope and is designed to cover all capture fisheries in inland and marine waters, including all industrial, commercial, subsistence and recreational fisheries. It includes issues concerning species introductions (deliberate or unintentional), wild stock enhancement, wild fish destined for on-growing or fattening in captivity, and stock recovery.

10. The Strategy does not apply to aquaculture because aquaculture has distinctive requirements that need to be addressed specifically for this increasingly important sector.

11. The main focus of the Strategy is on information concerning the fishery resources and the primary fisheries sector, including socio-economic information.

PART 3: OBJECTIVE

12. The overall objective of the Strategy is to provide a framework for the improvement of knowledge and understanding of fishery status and trends as a basis for fisheries policy-making and management for the conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources within ecosystems.

13. The Strategy will be implemented through arrangements between States, directly or through their participation of regional fishery organizations, and FAO working cooperatively to assemble information on the status and trends of fisheries, and using modern information technology to manage and disseminate it. These arrangements should be established at various geographic scales, ranging from local, to national, to regional, and they should be linked to form a global system under the auspices of FAO. Wherever, and whenever, possible, existing organizations should be used as the basis of the arrangements.

14. Global efforts to assemble and disseminate comprehensive information (e.g., through the FAO Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS)) on the status and trends of fisheries are currently hindered because a complete inventory of the fisheries and fish stocks of the world does not exist. A key element of the Strategy is to prepare such inventories, which would be implemented in FIGIS.

15. Consistent with Article 5 of the Code of Conduct, the capacity of developing countries should be duly taken into account in implementing the Strategy. The capacity of developing countries, particularly the least-developed among them, small island States, and countries whose data collection systems are in a critical condition, needs to be greatly enhanced so that they can fulfil existing commitments to collect fisheries statistics and to conduct fisheries research, thus allowing them to more fully participate in the Strategy.

PART 4: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

16. The arrangements for implementation of this Strategy should be based on the six guiding principles highlighted in the paragraphs that follow.

Sustainability

17. Arrangements for assembling and disseminating information on the status and trends of fisheries should be viable in the long term. As a consequence: (1) adequate funding should be provided at the national, regional and global levels, taking into account the resources available to countries, regional fishery bodies and FAO; and (2) the programme should consider the particular needs of developing countries which may require large investments in training and capacity building, to facilitate the formulation of appropriate national programmes or strategies.

Best Scientific Evidence

18. Arrangements for assembling and disseminating information on the status and trends of fisheries should contribute to the best scientific evidence available. Protocols for assuring the quality of scientific information should be applied wherever and whenever practicable and appropriate. Such protocols should take account of the need to consider knowledge of participants in the fisheries, as well as traditional knowledge.

Participation and cooperation

19. Arrangements for assembling and disseminating information on the status and trends of fisheries should adopt mechanisms for inclusion of all relevant participants in the preparation, analysis and presentation of fishery information. Relevant participants may include, inter alia, fishers, industry representatives, non-governmental organizations. States should, in accordance with international law, cooperate with other States in developing and maintaining such fishery information, as appropriate, either directly, or through appropriate intergovernmental organizations, including regional fishery bodies. States should provide feedback on the status and trends of fisheries to all relevant participants.

Objectivity and Transparency

20. Arrangements for assembling and disseminating information on the status and trends of fisheries should contribute to providing the best scientific evidence available (Paragraph 18), and to transparency, in support of Article 6.13 of the Code of Conduct, while respecting any confidentiality requirements. Uncertainty associated with status and trends information should be expressed.

Timeliness

21. Arrangements for assembling and disseminating information on the status and trends of fisheries should result in information being provided in a timely manner.

Flexibility

22. Arrangements for assembling and disseminating information on the status and trends of fisheries should be flexible enough to permit adjustments as necessary to ensure that they effectively support fishery policy-making and management through the provision of appropriate information.

PART 5: REQUIRED ACTIONS

Need for capacity-building in developing countries

23. States, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and financial institutions, should address developing country needs for financial and technical assistance, technology transfer, training and scientific cooperation, in order to build capacity to implement cost-effective and sustainable fishery data collection, data processing, analysis and reporting, and exchange information. Capacity building is necessary to fulfil national needs, the needs of regional fishery bodies and arrangements, existing obligations for reporting fisheries data to FAO, and so that developing countries can more fully participate in, and benefit from, the Strategy.

Data collection systems in small-scale fisheries and multispecies fisheries

24. States, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and financial institutions should recognize that many small-scale fisheries and multi-species fisheries, particularly in developing countries, are not well monitored and awareness needs to be raised on the importance of monitoring these fisheries. They are probably underestimated and therefore underrepresented in current fisheries status and trends information, and consequently they are not adequately considered in the development of plans and policies for fisheries.

25. States should, with support from development partner agencies and assistance from FAO, where necessary, enhance their capacities to collect data to ensure that the coverage of fisheries information is as complete as possible and covers all sectors, in particular the data necessary to evaluate small-scale and multi-species fisheries.

26. States should participate in and support the development of cost-effective methods for acquiring and validating data on small-scale and multispecies fisheries, including rapid appraisal methodologies and other approaches for data-poor situations and participatory processes that closely associate the fishers and their organizations to the data collection schemes. Regular surveys at appropriate frequencies rather than continuous monitoring may be more feasible, particularly for some inland and small-scale fisheries.

27. States should cooperate through their regional fishery organizations and regional programmes, if necessary with the cooperation of FAO, to develop and adopt effective and pragmatic standards and systems for data collection, which should be compatible with FAO systems.

28. FAO, with support from member States and development partner agencies, should address the special data collection and assessment needs for small-scale and multispecies fisheries, including the use of meetings of experts to develop innovative approaches and guidelines.

Expanding the scope of information on status and trends of fisheries, including the need to incorporate ecosystem considerations into fisheries management

29. States should approach the implementation of the Code of Conduct, in particular as this relates to Article 7 (Fisheries Management), especially Article 7.4.2 and Article 12 (Fisheries Research), by consideration of ways to expand the scope of status and trends reporting to meet the responsibilities recommended therein for research and the dissemination of information on the effects of climatic, environmental and socio-economic factors on fishery conservation and management.

30. States, directly or through participation in regional fisheries organizations, should consider broadening the collection of information on the status and trends of fisheries to support further development of fisheries management incorporating ecosystem considerations.

31. FAO, with support of Members, and with full participation of regional fishery organizations should further address the issue of indicators of sustainable development, as a follow-up to the Australia-FAO Technical Consultation on Sustainability Indicators in Marine Capture Fisheries (Sydney, Australia, January 1999).

Global inventory of fish stocks and fisheries

32. States should participate in, or support coordinated efforts for the compilation of a global inventory of fisheries and fish stocks (biological management units) or stock-complexes as a basis to improve the completeness of available information on the status and trends of fisheries and for inclusion in FIGIS.

33. As a first step towards development of the inventory, States should collaborate with FAO to develop the definitions, form, content, methods and implementation (including the definition and allocation of responsibilities and the estimation of costs) of a programme for the compilation of a global inventory of fisheries and fish stocks (or stock-complexes), noting the requirements for, and coordinating efforts with, the actions being undertaken through IPOAs.

34. FAO, with support of its Members, either directly or through regional fishery organizations, should consider establishing a process for scientific oversight of fishery status and trends information, including the global inventory of fish stocks and fisheries, the global reviews of fishery status and trends prepared for the biennial State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) and the ongoing FAO submissions to the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS).

FIGIS participation, structuring and capacity-building

35. States should support, both directly or through participation in regional fisheries organizations, development of Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS), by:

- Providing national user requirements for outputs from and inputs to the system;
- Participating in national, regional and international processes to define the protocols for information exchange, quality assurance or quality rating, and transparency provisions to be specified in partnership agreements;
- Contributing timely information to FIGIS;
- Facilitating a systematic synthesis of information on fishery status and trends from national to regional and global levels; and
- Participating in complementary information and communication technology initiatives aimed at improving the generation and dissemination of research-based knowledge relevant to sustainable development.

36. States should, either directly or through their participation in regional fisheries organizations, provide FIGIS with the best scientific information available. The assurance of information quality could be established by review processes at the national or regional level.

37. States should support FAO and other FIGIS partners, as appropriate, in the organization of and participation in pilot projects and workshops, to further develop and implement FIGIS, to develop training materials, and to conduct training.

38. FAO should continue to develop FIGIS, using modern information and communication technology, as a partnership between FAO, regional fisheries organizations, and national organizations, and other organizations that can make a positive contribution to the System.

Development of criteria and methods for ensuring information quality and security

39. States should participate in the development of criteria and methods to ensure information quality and security for the purposes of best scientific evidence, in accordance with internationally agreed standards and practices, through mechanisms for data verification, and in a manner consistent with applicable confidentiality requirements. States should apply the agreed criteria and methods.

40. FAO, with support of, and participation by, Members should facilitate the development of practical guidelines for quality assurance, transparency and security of fishery information.

Development of arrangements for the provision and exchange of information

41. States, directly or through their participation in regional fisheries organizations, should seek and agree on arrangements to facilitate the provision and exchange of information on the status and trends of fisheries with FAO, as appropriate. These arrangements should address the roles and entitlements of the partners, including in relation to information quality, transparency and confidentiality.

The role of working groups in assessing the status and trends of fisheries

42. Working groups composed of fishery experts and set up by countries or regional fishery organizations that meet to assess the status and trends of fish stocks and fisheries and which conduct their work according to terms of reference which specify the scope of their activities, are an important mechanism for enhancing the quality and transparency of scientific information. They can also provide important opportunities for capacity building.

43. States, directly or through participation in regional fisheries organizations in their respective jurisdictions and regional programmes, should formalize arrangements for working groups to analyse fisheries data and fish stocks information towards the evaluation of their status and trends. The periodicity of these working group meetings would depend on available human and financial resources and the nature of the fisheries and the fish stocks concerned.

44. States and development partner agencies should work with FAO to ensure the participation of fishery experts from around the world in working groups, particularly where these working groups contribute to capacity building in developing countries. The TCDC and other FAO programmes could be used for this purpose.

Sustaining data collection, information on the status and trend of fisheries

45. States should monitor their systems for data collection, analysis and reporting. States should ensure the sustainability of these systems to meet the needs of fishery policy making and management and the agreed requirements of regional fishery organizations and FAO and take corrective actions as appropriate.

PART 6: PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

General call for improving information on the status and trends of fisheries

46. States, regional fishery bodies and international institutions should develop and implement mechanisms for the improvement of fisheries information, the application of research to enhance the availability of best scientific evidence, and the adoption of a continuing process for the enrichment of fishery status and trends information to support conservation, management and sustainable use of fishery resources at local, regional and global levels.

The role of States

47. States should evaluate the actions they need to take to improve information on the status and trends of fisheries, address these needs on a priority basis, and report on the improvements they make, as part of their biennial report to FAO on the Code of Conduct.

The role of regional fishery organizations

48. Regional fishery bodies, within the limits defined by their conventions and to the extent mandated by their members, should participate in the implementation of this Strategy, by providing support to their members, participating in global programmes and decisions on the development and adoption of standards and guidelines for information on the status and trends fisheries, becoming a partner in FIGIS.

The role of FAO

49. FAO will, as and to the extent directed by its Conference, and as part of its Regular and Field Programme activities, support States and regional fishery bodies in the implementation of this Strategy.

50. FAO will, as and to the extent directed by its Conference, support member States' implementation of this Strategy, through in-country technical assistance projects using Regular Programme funds and by use of extra-budgetary funds made available to the Organization for this purpose. For better conservation and management of fishery resources, FAO should prepare a specific programme for establishing effective and sustainable systems for data collection, processing and analysis in developing countries, including in particular the least-developed among them.

51. FAO will, through COFI, report biennially on the state of progress in the implementation of the Strategy.

Role of development partner agencies and non-governmental organizations

52. International and national development partner agencies, should give priority to the provision of financial and technical assistance to developing countries, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing states, and countries whose data collection systems are in a critical condition, for capacity building and information system development, as necessary for implementation of this Strategy.

53. Non-governmental organizations (national, regional and international) concerned with fisheries, fisher-folk and the aquatic environment and research into these, should encourage implementation of the Strategy through appropriate support, information methods development and capacity building and participation.

The Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries was held in Rome, Italy, from 24 to 28 February 2003. The Committee approved a Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries and recommended its further approval by the FAO Council. The Committee reaffirmed the need for global implementation of measures against Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and recommended that IUU fishing be included in the Agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the FAO Conference with a view to calling the attention of Members to this issue. The Committee recognized the crucial importance of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related International Plans of Action (IPOAs) in promoting long-term sustainable development of fisheries and encouraged Members to establish and implement National Plans of Action to put into effect the International Plans of Actions on Capacity, IUU Fishing, Sharks and Seabirds. The Committtee identified key priority areas of work for the FAO Fisheries Department during the biennium 2004–2005 and the areas of work for its Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture.

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